

2010

# Budget Usability without a Usability Budget

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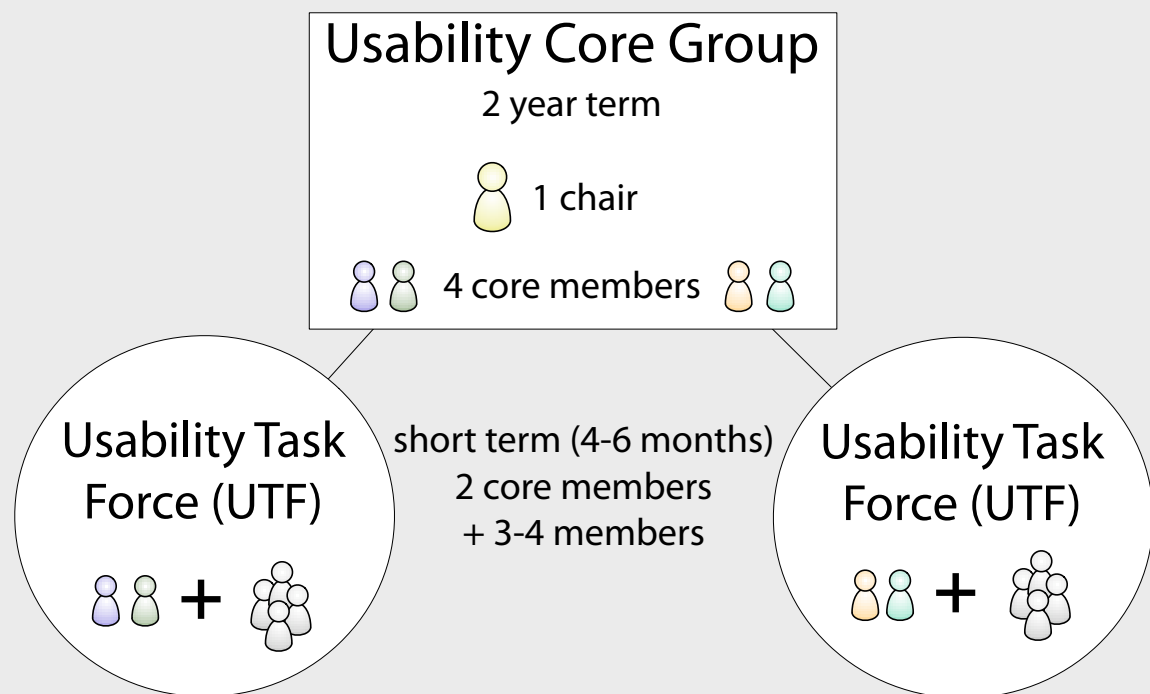
*Downloaded from Deep Blue, University of Michigan's institutional repository*

## Committee Structure

The MLibrary Core Usability group is charged with supporting the organization's usability needs. The group consists of 5 members: a chair who specializes in User Experience and 4 members from public services and information technology, whose primary job responsibilities lie elsewhere.

The core group regularly convenes project-based task forces. Task forces are made up of staff volunteers with an interest in usability and/or the project. Task force members design and conduct tests using a variety of methods.

- 28 staff members participated on 4 project task forces over 2 years
- 6 different systems evaluated
- 10 reports produced



## Standard Methods

- comparative evaluation
- heuristic evaluation
- card sorting
- guerrilla testing
- paper prototyping
- participatory design
- formal user tests
- surveys
- individual interviews
- focus groups

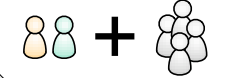
## Budget

Usability doesn't have to be complicated and time-consuming. We favor more straightforward, "budget" techniques as a means to the most interesting and useful results.

Ⓢ = \$0  
Ⓢ = \$1-\$25  
ⓈⓈ = \$25+

## 2010 Library Website Task Force

Usability Task Force (UTF)



- November 2009 – April 2010
- 3 methods used for 4 different evaluations
- Approximately 200 total testing participants
- Open staff session held at the beginning of the project to solicit feedback

**FINDING:** Marked as *useful* by all user groups but many included suggestions for refinements.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Evaluate current usage statistics to validate findings and fine tune functionality.

**FINDING:** Content found under libraries, departments, services is extremely difficult and complex to organize. Names used to describe these things are not easily understood and require descriptions.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Offer descriptions when possible. Explore new categories: Administration, Libraries/Locations, Publishing, Getting Help, Getting Things.

**FINDING:** Relatively few markings with a mix of *useful* and *not useful*.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Since staff consider content available here (Ask a Librarian & LibGuides) to be valuable, this section needs to be more prominent.

**FINDING:** Varied drastically by user group: undergrads didn't mark it much either way, grad students & faculty mostly marked as *not useful*. Many staff noted that it takes up too much space.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Re-evaluate scope of content to include more content that is considered to be *useful* (News, Events, & Did You Know?). Consider minimizing.

**FINDING:** Mostly *useful* to all user groups.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Continue to use section and keep content current.

**FINDING:** Mostly *useful* to undergrads.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Expand scope and make focus on undergraduate topics.

**FINDING:** Overwhelmingly marked as *not useful* by all user groups.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Move to footer and minimize to one link.

**FINDING:** Majority marked as *useful*, but a few individual links marked *not useful* & a few notes added for missing links. Many added notes requesting more prominent placement.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Fine-tune links listed and move to more prominent location.

**FINDING:** Outages not understood or considered to be useful. More than half of users requested addition of Webmail link. Quick Links label works well.  
**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Before:**  
QUICK LINKS  
My Account  
EJournals  
Library Hours  
Outages  
CTools  
Wolverine Access

**After:**  
QUICK LINKS  
My Library Account  
Online Journal List  
Library Hours  
Outages  
CTools  
Wolverine Access

**FINDING:** Most participants preferred a different order.  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Reorder 1st column: databases, catalog, online journals (renamed) & 2nd column: website, research guides (renamed).

## Card Sorting *Organization of Services/Departments/Libraries*

The goal for these tests was to recategorize content on the web site currently grouped under Services, Departments and Libraries.

### Group Paper Card Sort for Students

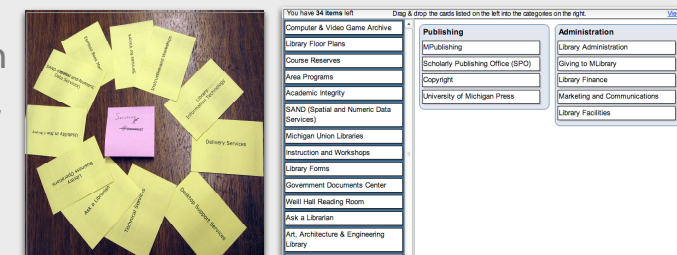
- 18 participants: undergrads, grad students (divided into 4 groups)
- Organized 84 cards representing half of this content
- This method allowed us to see interaction among students, hear thought processes, and better understand confusing labels

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### Individual Online Card Sort for Library Staff

- 140 staff completed exercise
- Provided more data, but didn't expose the thought process

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## Guerrilla Testing *Quick Links and Search & Browse Results*

The goals were to determine a) the order of the headings on the search results and the browse results pages, and b) to fine-tune the contents & labels for the Quick Links section.

We call this "guerrilla testing" because we hope to get quick and short answers to quick and short questions. Five minutes is our goal!

### Quick Links

- 20 participants: undergrads, grad students
- Shown the current Quick Links section without its title-- asked to name the section and describe where each link went
- Then asked what links they would most like to see in a grouping of links like this one

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### Search & Browse Results

- 12 participants
- Asked to search or browse on a topic of interest to them
- Then asked to view results, reorder the headings, and suggest alternative headings

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## Participatory Design *Library Gateway*

The goal for this exercise was to gain a better understanding of which tools and sections of the Library website's home page the participants found most and least useful.

- 37 participants: undergrads, grad students, faculty and Library staff
- Asked to circle the things they find useful, make an X through the things they don't find useful, and add a note for anything they think is missing

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